

THE ISSUES

FROM THE DESK OF MU EXTENSION
HOME & FAMILY FIELD FACULTY



IOWA CONCERN HOTLINE 800-447-1985

Mental health experts predict an increase in deaths by suicide due to recent stress-related factors among farmers and ranchers.

Iowa State Extension offers Missouri farmers and ranchers access to a free 24-hour hotline and numerous other resources to deal with stress. The hotline is free, confidential and allows individuals to receive services from the comfort of their home, barn, or even equipment. University of Missouri Extension offers many services to help farmers with stress. Go to www.extension.missouri.edu or ShowMeStrongFarmFamilies on Facebook for more resources.

This hotline is provide by the Farmers and Ranchers Stress Alliance Network and funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. NC FRSAC Grant Number:USDA 2020-70028-3278

WHAT'S NEW?

Iowa Concern Hotline
800-447-1985

Where are your
Walnuts

Keeping Safe in the
Heat

Stay on Task

WHERE ARE YOUR WALNUTS

BY JEREMIAH TERRELL

When I graduated from high school, I received several gifts and cards. The gifts were often either money or some trinket that I no longer have today. And the cards, well they were filled with well wishes and inspiring idioms to aid me in my journey forward in life. Of all the things that I received, none has secured as strong a place in my memory as the gift that was given to me by an older cousin. It was a jar filled with walnuts and rice. As an 18-year-old, I remember saying to myself “what in the world is this?” And to be honest, I was not all that thrilled to have it. But I have grown to treasure that gift, even to this day.



You see, the gift was, in and of itself, an idiom. Along with the jar was a small slip of paper that described the meaning of the jar and its contents. The jar represents the time that we have in life. The walnuts represent the things that are important in life. The things we value. The things we get to do in life. The rice represents all the other stuff. The stuff that we must do. If we fill the jar with the rice first, then we will not have room for the walnuts. So, for everything to fit into the jar, we must put the walnuts in first.

“...the people who pursue happiness by seeking out pleasant experiences as part of their everyday lives are happier.”
-Lahnna Catalino, Ph.D.

But, before we can put the walnuts into the jar, we must identify the walnuts. Ask yourself, “what are the things that are most important to me?” “What are the things that I value?” When we get those things into the jar, the “must do’s” in life will fit around them. For me, this has been a continual process of defining what is important to me. There is no shortage of rice, make sure you get your walnuts!

KEEPING SAFE IN THE HEAT

BY KATIE PEMBERTON

It's not a secret that the summers in Missouri are hot and humid. With over 100,000 farms in the state of Missouri and many other outdoor jobs available, heat can play an important role in the health of Missourian's. Two heat conditions exist:



Heat Exhaustion (least severe)

o **Symptoms**

- cool, moist, pale, ashen or flushed skin
- headache
 - nausea
 - dizziness
- weakness
 - exhaustion

o **What to do if you suspect someone is experiencing heat exhaustion:**

- Remove the individual from the heat
- Loosen or remove as much clothing as possible
- Apply cool, wet cloths.
- If the individual is conscious, give them small amounts of either sports drinks or fruit juice to replace electrolytes. Only allow them to drink 4 ounces every 15 minutes.
- The individual should not resume their activities for the day and if they do not improve, have changes in consciousness or vomit, call 9-1-1.

Heat Stroke (more severe)

o **Symptoms**

- Usually occurs when heat exhaustion is ignored
- Extremely high body temperature
- Red skin that can either be dry or moist
- Changes in consciousness
 - Rapid or weak pulse
 - Rapid or shallow breathing
 - Vomiting
 - Seizures
 - Confusion

o **What to do if you suspect someone is experiencing a heat stroke**

- Call 9-1-1
- Immerse the individual up to the neck in cold water, spray or sponge the person with cold water or cover with bags of ice.

Heat can be extremely dangerous and needs to be taken serious. So remember stay safe, stay hydrated and stay cool!

STAY ON TASK

BY AMY BARTELS

The tendency toward distraction and staying on task can be even more difficult in our post-pandemic culture. Returning to the workplace and balancing the desire for social interaction with the increased pace of productivity can leave many feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. With overstimulation from emails, texts and the Internet, it is becoming more and more difficult to stay focused and productive throughout the day. Here are a few tools to keep you on track:

- **Drowning Out Noise.** Workplace distractions can decrease one’s focus. White noise machines, earplugs or headphones with classical music can provide great relief when trying to focus in a busy environment.
- **Pomodoro Technique.** The idea of staying focused for 5 hours can seem daunting. The Pomodoro technique (originating from a tomato-shaped kitchen timer) helps to break this chore into manageable increments. Here’s how it works.
 1. Remove all distractions: close emails, silence phones and shut office door if applicable.
 2. Set a timer for 25 minutes (1 “Pomodoro”).
 3. Work solely on 1 task, completely uninterrupted, for 25 minutes.
 4. Once the timer goes off, take a short break (chat with colleagues, walk around or meditate).
 5. After completing 4 “Pomodoros,” take a longer break of 15 or 20 minutes to rest your brain before the next round.
- **Staying Active.** Take active breaks during the day by walking around or climbing stairs. Stretching, standing, even pacing while on a phone call can help to alleviate the tendency for your mind to wander. Exercise releases dopamine which can “wake up your brain” and allow you to regain focus (Tartakovsky, 2016).
- **Do Not Disturb.** Being firm about setting boundaries, and making it clear to others that you are in “work mode” can keep your brain focused on the task at hand. Set up a time-blocking calendar, but also keep in mind that some interruptions may be unavoidable. Scheduling in breaks and allowing yourself time to catch up with co-workers can minimize distractions throughout your day.

MU EXTENSION: FAMILY AND HOME

For more research-based programs and tips on housing, parenting, relationships, divorce, senior living, and personal finance visit <https://extension2.missouri.edu/find-your-interest/youth-and-family/family-and-home-education>

Editor: Katie Pemberton pembertonk@missouri.edu
Contributing Authors: MU Extension Home & Family campus and field faculty



To learn more about programs in your area, contact your local Extension office.

Find your local extension office:
<https://extension2.missouri.edu/locations>



MUEXTFAMILYHOME